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## EDITORIAL.

THE SUCCESS which has heretofore attended the issue of special numbers leads us to hope that the one announced for June, to cover the work of the field and herbarium, will meet with a hearty response from collectors (and what botanist is not a collector?). The object in view is not to bring together all that might be said in reference to the collection and preservation of plants, our space would not permit that, but to present new and less known methods and observations. Almost every one who gathers plants has some special method or some ingenious device, which has grown out of his experience or necessity; such items are particularly desired. There are also things to be said about finding, gathering and final disposition of certain classes of plants calling for independent treatment, which, although well understood by specialists of each class, are unknown or imperfectly known to others. In order to combine entertainment with instruction some short narratives connected with herborizing will be acceptable. The material for this number will be partly presented as separate articles over the signatures of the contributors, and partly grouped under general headings, in which case due credit will be given for all assistance. There need be no hesitancy, therefore, in forwarding items because they are short, for these will be equally as acceptable and useful as the long ones. A half-dozen well considered lines from each one of several collectors, which may be sent on a postal card, might together form a valuable article. The term 'plants' in this connection is used to cover all vegetable growths which are gathered into herbaria or exsiccatae, including the various sorts of flowering plants and ferns, the mosses and liverworts, fresh and salt water algae, lichens, fleshy, parasitic and other fungi, and even the bacteria. There are smaller groups in each of these classes to which general methods are not applicable, and which call for special mention. Material for this number should be sent in as early in April as convenient.

BOTANY IN AMERICA was never in a more flourishing condition than at the present time. American systematic work, especially that emanating from Harvard, has long stood in the front rank, but other departments of the science have not until recently been so assiduously or successfully cultivated. The study of the anatomy, development and habits of plants received a great impulse by the advent of Sachs' Text-book in 1875, and was especially promoted by Bessey's Botany in 1880. The latest addition to this line of text-books, Goodale's Physiological Botany, attests its excellence by receiving commendation, not only at home where it was expected, but abroad. A critical review in the *Botanisches Centralblatt* speaks of it as marking an important event for American science, and ranks it in some respects above the text-books of German writers. The *Gardeners' Chronicle* of England calls it "one of the most useful summaries yet issued." This may be taken as an index to our advancement in the teacher's sphere. It would not be hard to trace a connection between good didactic works and the increase of original research. In the latter we are surely making notable progress. *Nature*, in noticing the Associa-

tion number of this journal, took occasion to say of the botanical papers presented at Ann Arbor, that "these furnish satisfactory evidence of the good work doing in this branch of science on the American continent, and will not suffer from comparison with a similar record at any of the recent meetings of our own [British] Association." Some of the papers are mentioned as "giving especially good evidence of a capacity for original work." American botanists may well feel encouraged at these signs of intellectual prosperity.

THERE ARE TWO things that we would like to see our systematic botanists do. The first has reference to the citation of authorities. It is the most evident injustice to ignore and lose sight of the author who originally defined a species. This becomes painfully evident when by some change in our notions of generic limitations whole groups of species are set adrift, to be caught up and named in a wholesale way by some one who had nothing whatever to do with defining the species. In such a case it would be very simple to cite two authorities, one in parenthesis referring to the author who originally published the species, under whatever name, the other the authority as now quoted. This would not only be justice, but would also facilitate reference to the literature of the species. The first author holds a peculiar relation to the species that should be acknowledged constantly. It is his by right of discovery, and whatever name it may afterwards be called does not affect this fact, and should not prevent his name being forever connected with it.

The other thing is in reference to generic names. It is our belief that a name once used for a genus should never be so used again even if the genus has been reduced to a synonym. This should be especially avoided within the limits of a single order. There is no telling when the old genus may appear again, and then the new one must be renamed and synonymy becomes confused.

THE NEW EDITORS of the *Torrey Bulletin* have made a change in the dress of that journal and have increased the number of pages to sixteen, using larger type and dividing the articles more prominently. The January number opens with a synopsis of North American species of *Myosurus* by Dr. Gray. The "Index to American botanical literature," to which eight pages are given in this issue, is an excellent resumé, somewhat after the style of the *Literaturbericht* of German journals. We hope that there will be enough sound American literature to keep this department always full, but we doubt it. We are glad to note the increasing vigor of the *Bulletin*, and wish its new editors abundant success.

A WORD of explanation seems to be necessary regarding the place of publication of the first ten volumes of the GAZETTE. Cataloguers and indexers have fallen into natural mistakes in regard to this matter by assuming, in the absence of any direct statement to the contrary, that the *printers* were also the publishers. One prominent index goes so far as to style it "a migratory publication." As a matter of fact the GAZETTE in the ten years of its existence has had but two offices of publication. From November, 1875, to August, 1879, it was published from Hanover, Indiana, and since that time from Crawfordsville, Indiana.

THE EDITORS were more disappointed than subscribers could have been when the February number of the GAZETTE appeared with the cover of the last

decade. It was one of those things which happen, no one knows exactly how. It is proper to say that the same mistake will not be repeated.

THE NUMBERS of the GAZETTE for 1885 were mailed on the following dates: 1, Jan. 8; 2, Feb. 14; 3, Mar. 14; 4, April 24; 5, May 19; 6, June 4; 7, July 11; 8, Aug. 11; 9 and 10, Oct. 7; 11, Nov. 11; 12, Dec. 20.

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## OPEN LETTERS.

### Reverchon's Texan Ferns.

I have received from Mr. Reverchon a set of the ferns recently collected by him in South-Western Texas, and find, among other desirable species, such rare ferns as *Pellaea aspera*, *Pellaea flexuosa*, *Pellaea Wrightiana* (typical form), *Notholaena candida* and *Aneimia Mexicana*, well represented.

The specimens are well selected, and in every respect excellent.

As some of these species have long been a desideratum to botanists, they will be glad to know that there is now an opportunity to secure specimens from a collector whose reputation is so well known.

With the ferns came specimens of *Selaginella apus*, two forms of *S. rupestris* and *Marsilia macropoda* A. Br. The specimens of the last being more villous than those which I had formerly received from Mrs. Young, I was led to look upon them as a possible large form of *M. vestita*, and I am indebted to the kindness of Prof. Eaton for a more accurate determination.

Medford, Mass.

GEO. E. DAVENPORT.

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### A Glue for the Herbarium.

It may interest certain old-fashioned botanists, who in these progressive days still find an interest in herbaria, to know that carriage-glue is an excellent medium for mounting. It is always ready, and one dispenses with the intolerable nuisance of a water-bath. Work which accumulated on my hands to a formidable amount I have been able to quickly and surely discharge by its employment. The glue, which is a semi-fluid, easily thinned by water, comes in tin cans of various sizes, and prices from 30 cents upwards. Given the glue, the curator has then only to provide the small boy to apply it.

Brown University, Providence, R. I.

W. W. BAILEY.

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### De profundis.

A curator of a museum is often placed in a predicament. I am convinced from considerable experience, that connected with every *young* herbarium, at least, there should be an underground railway for the transportation of trash to some Botany Bay. I can not always afford to smilingly bow off a benefactor that offers me a daisy from the grave of Burns, or a sprig of ivy from Kenilworth. In his way he means well, and it might be hard to convince him that scientific interests and those of sentiment may not always coincide. He may, too, be one of the persons back of the academic throne, and hence, as hinted above, the curator must be receptive and bland. But, then, must he not, of necessity, shelve some of these odds and ends?

Again, why are givers, especially botanists, so blind to the best interests of science, as to insist on special cases for their own collections? A herbarium should be continuous and connected. It is exasperating when one wishes to consult things in sequence, to be compelled to hunt through three or four separate collections. Still again, and my cry is from a personal pain, why may